

The Heirs of Ishmael

576 bade asking direct questions of a stranger. A Rueyli
721 called out: "Khalati—it is a great prince who comes, O
blessed daughter, to honour thee."

"And where is his *dira* (pasture) that I may send
Hamar, our old slave, to proclaim him to our neigh-
bour?"

"His name is 'The Young Falcon', and his *dira* ex-
tends as far as his eyes rove. It is thy son, O mother of
Amir Fuaz."

[752] In this foray, Rasheyd, the leader, had his right hand
721 severed by a sword cut. He fainted from loss of blood.
685 Our slaves then plunged the mutilated arm in boiling
648 fat—a desperate remedy but successful, for Rasheyd re-
covered. He carried his amputated hand from that day
forward in the saddle of his racing-camel. It dried up
completely, like the hand of a mummy.

When we reached Bahr Saigal, not far from Dumeyr,
the first Turkish fortress in Syria, its Commandant sent
a cavalry detachment to our camp. He had been in-
formed by telegraph of our illicit operations in the vi-
cinity of the cultivated lands of Mesopotamia. His
troopers were seeking Rasheyd, who was to be made an-
swerable. But Rasheyd could not reconcile himself to
the prospect of a Turkish dungeon. He placed his with-
ered hand in a leather bag and dictated to Nauaf's *katib*
(scribe) the following letter addressed to the Comman-
dant at Dumeyr:

"In the name of the Benevolent and Compassionate!
As *askar* (soldier) I cannot serve thy *Padishab* (Sultan),
for I have but a stump of an arm. As thy prisoner I
could do no work for thee; nay, as a friend I could not

721 *The Young Prince of the Ruala, Amir Fuz*

- 685 even grasp thy hand. What use then being with thee?
648 As a token of my everlasting surrender, however, I offer
to thee my hand, since thou art wont to cut off the hand
of a thief. Be sure it is my own hand—the hand of
Rasheyd-ibn-Whafa, the robber. May God be forbear-
ing with us.”

302 thus plaited and dressing with some taste, *walad jensab*, is
305 called a *ǧāhel*. In the case of men not wearing plaits the
barber cuts the hair, *ǧāse*. His work finished, the barber sa-
lutes the shaven one with the words: "May'st thou preserve
thy health and capture camels! *eslam u-erham al-bel*." The
answer is: "May Allāh reward thee! *āḡerak 'al-allāh*," the
barber adding: "May Allāh receive thee into his mercy! *sā-
maḡk allāh*." The common barber is nearly always an inde-
pendent, *ḥorr*, Bedouin. He shaves for a good word, not for
[576 pay, and must, therefore, be thanked, for nothing is more
181] disagreeable to an independent Bedouin than discourtesy and
ingratitude for favors or services rendered; therefore the say-
ing: "Bitter is the fatigue of a free Bedouin, *ṭa'ab al-ḥorr
murr*."

Long plaits are the pride of a childishly vain Bedouin,
ǧāhel, and often lead to his undoing. When pursued, he can
be easily captured if the enemy catches hold of his plaits. For
not only is he unable to escape, but his enemies can bind his
hands behind his neck with his own hair and, besides, tie one
or two plaits around his leg above the ankle. Hence the say-
ing: "Thy hair is thy snare, *rāsak 'arāpak*." Mindil al-Ḳaṭ'i,
my companion, told me that he was once caught by some men
of the Tūmān clan of the Šammar tribe, whose camel he had
tried to steal, and was bound by his own plaits. When they
dismissed him the next day, they cut the plaits through. From
that time Mindil has worn his hair short, *ǧāse*.

302 When the Bedouin catches a thief, whether afoot (*ḥājeṣ*)
● 685 or mounted (*ma'ajjer*), from a tribe with which he is at
war, *ḥawṣāni*, he cuts off a piece of his plait, accompany-
ing his action with the words: "I let thee go free for Allāh's
sake, *ana maṭeik lillāh*," and adds: "If I catch thee again,
I surely will cut off thy chin beard; in *ḡazabtak laḡaṣṣ la-
ḡittak*." To cut a man's chin beard is, in the popular idea, as
302 bad as cutting off his head, *laḡṣa' rāsak*. It is much easier
628 for the relatives of a murdered man to forgive the slayer
than for the kinsmen of a Bedouin insulted by having his
beard cut off to be reconciled with the culprit. Sābel an-Nu-
ṣejri of the Rwala once went to the Beni Šaḡr tribe to seek
his two she-camels which had been stolen from him, *waḡṣa*,
some time before. He bore a letter of recommendation for
the chief, given him by Prince Saṭṭām, who asked the chief
either to return to Sābel his animals or to see to it that he

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Then the chief must send some one to the persons named to find out whether such is the case. If the messenger comes back with a report that the traveler has spoken the truth, the chief is obliged to return to him everything of which he has been robbed. Should he fail to do so he would dishonor his countenance, and his disgrace would spread all over the desert, with the result that his tribe, ashamed of the affair, would depose him. 486 622 576

To refuse his countenance or protection to any one is a disgrace, as it is, likewise, to ask for a reward when granting it; for the face must remain clean, must not be stained with any dirt *al-wağh naẓif mâ jaršâh ad-danas*. 577

The famous Rwejli warrior Fhejd eben Ma'abher had his camp in the Damascus territory, and yet he successfully protected a Šammar woman who appealed to the protection of his face. She camped with her husband in Neğd by the valley of ar-Rma'. Her husband, becoming angry with her for some reason, began to beat her. Then she started to cry: 572 593

"*Jâ fhejd jâ ba'ad hajji*." Thus young women call for protection, the meaning of the words being that the woman will submit to her protector in everything. Her husband was not a little surprised at that:

"Tell me, my comrades, how can my wife call on Fhejd when he camps a month's journey from us? *tenha 'alejje fhejd w-hw msâfet šahr zamânen 'anna*."

Yet some Akejl camel buyers just then in camp heard the Šammar woman's cries and spoke about it in the various camps to which their business brought them, the report of the incident finally reaching Fhejd himself. Ordering his slaves and fellow tribesmen to assemble for a raid, he rode around the Nefûd on the east and in about twenty-five days reached the camp where the woman was living. There Fhejd declared that he would harm no one if they showed him the husband's tent. When they showed him both the tent and the man, Fhejd set his she-camel running, stabbed the man with his spear in the thigh, and said to him:

"Thou filthy beast, didst doubt that thy wife has my protection? If thou harmest her again, I will kill thee." After this Fhejd returned to his people, meeting them in the Sirhân depression.

If it is a matter of common knowledge that the head chief has lent a traveler his face or if the latter is accom- 572 486 685

572 panied by a *hawī* (or *hawī*) and, nevertheless, some member of
 486 the chief's tribe or a fellow tribesman of the *hawī* attacks and
 635 robs him, the culprit is punished with far greater severity
 [633] than if he had committed murder, *takṭī al-waḡh aṣ'ab min*
 628] *qabhat az-zelema* (sic). For in a case of murder the blood price
 is fixed by ancient custom, whereas a chief or a *hawī* and their
 kin may ask any compensation they wish for the corruption
 of the face. Of such unlimited demands every robber is very
 much afraid, and therefore, although he often beats the *hawī*
 soundly and curses him, he always returns to the traveler
 all that he has robbed him of and begs him to swear in the
hawī's presence that none of his property is missing and to
 forgive him.

THE *ḤAWI* OR COMPANION WHO PROTECTS TRAVELERS

486 If the traveler distrusts some tribe, he tries to hire as
 572 comrade either a member or an ally of the tribe, that he
 576 may then ride before his face. A companion protecting the
 619 traveler from both his fellow tribesmen and allies is called
 a *hawī*. To travel with a *hawī* is always easier than to travel
 before a chief's countenance, because a *hawī* can be seen and
 heard, whereas the protection of a chief, often living at a
 great distance, must be first proved, which not only takes
 some time but in most cases is difficult. For this reason the
 chief usually gives the traveler in addition to his protection
 one of his slaves or servants to act as companion.

In the selection of a *hawī* much caution is necessary. The
 more powerful and better known his kin, the more can his
 protection be depended upon. A common Rwejlī is unable to
 protect against all the 'Aneze but only against the division
 of this group of tribes called *Ẓana Muslim*. These people have
 an old, established custom that whenever any of them eats
 a meal with a traveler he also lends him his face, *hawījet*
su'ra. In this case it is not necessary at all for the traveler
 to ask him to be his *hawī*, as any man of the *Ẓana Muslim*
 is bound to deliver him from danger without a special request,
min rejr nab' jefekkeh. Only a culprit fleeing before an avenger
 cannot become a *hawī*.

One single face protects against all members of the *Ẓana*
Muslim; the same applies to the *Ẓana Bišr* and also to all the
 'Amārāt, the other two great divisions of the 'Aneze. As a

577 hearing distance or at a full spear's length from the far-
 572 thest tent pegs. When a pursued person cries from afar to
 696 the tent owner that he is putting himself under his protection
 and is heard, the latter is bound to protect him. The term for
 such an occurrence is *ḥakk as-sowt*. On reaching the sacred
 precincts the pursued man finds himself under the protection
 of the tent. If he is unable from exhaustion to proceed any
 farther and remains lying on the ground inside the precincts,
 no harm may be done to him, as that would be a violation
 of the tent, *'atab al-bejt*. The owner of the tent, his wife, or
 child shouts:

"Why dost thou violate my protégé? thine eyesight is
 sharp enough, is it not? *lēh ta'teb 'ala daḥīli ent 'ajnak žwijje*.
 With us the precincts of a tent are recognized as sacred by
 an old custom; no one would dare to violate it; *al-muḥārem*
'endana 'ādaten sānijjaten mā ḥad jakṭa'ha."

The persecuted man always tries to reach the tent. When
 he succeeds, he takes hold of the occupant's wife, or a girl
 there, or holds a baby towards his pursuers, saying:

"The protégé has arrived and saved himself, *daḥal ad-*
daḥil w-silem." The people in the tent, whether men or women,
 cry: "Our protégé! Stop, respect the tent; stand still! *daḥilana*
 • [695] *jammakom al-bejt al-bejt jammakom*." Anyone who injures or
 kills the protégé inside the tent must compensate the owner
 for disgracing his tent, *ḥakk bowžt al-bejt*. Disgracing of a
 tent is punished with greater severity than injury to the face,
ektā' al-waḡh. The distance from the protecting tent to the
 tent of the culprit is measured by steps, and the latter must

[628] give one *ḥežž* camel for every step as compensation for disgrac-
 ing the tent. If, however, the persecuted man has killed one
 of the tent owner's near kinsmen, no protection will be given
 him and he may be killed in the tent itself, even if the woman
 present at the time were to grant him protection, *daḥḥāla*.
 This proceeding is explained and excused by the rousing of
 the blood, *fowžt ad-damm*, of the kinsmen when they see or
 hear that one of their number has just been killed.

Protection obtained in person is followed by the granting
 of the protection of the countenance. The protégé moves
 constantly before the countenance of him whose protection
 he enjoys, *alli daḥal 'alejh*. Such protection cannot be limited
 but must be given a wide interpretation, *ad-daḥḥāla mamdūde*
mā hi maḥdūde; therefore there is never any dispute as to

579 a few hundred meters farther but away from the place where
 674 his comrade is stationed. The latter keeps his place at least one hour longer, waiting to see if by chance the theft has been discovered in the camp. Should an alarm be given and search made for the stolen animals, he tries to attract attention to himself and then leads the pursuers in a different direction from that taken by his comrade, until, after eluding them altogether, he makes haste to join him. Then, mounting the captured animal, he makes his escape while the pursuers are following the wrong scent.

685 If a thief is seen crawling near, he may be shot at sight. If he is caught, his captors beat him, *jaktolúneh*, revile him, *jaṣahmúneh*, and, if he is unknown to them, tie him fast to prevent him from running away and stealing something after all. After sunrise breakfast is given him and he is free to go wherever he wishes. In case the thief with the stolen mare escapes and his watching comrade is caught, *kaṣib*, the latter may be killed on the spot but must not be held in fetters to compel his comrade to return the stolen animal.
 681 Fettering is not an established custom, *mā hi 'ādaten sāni-*
 609 *jaten*, among friends. A member of a hostile tribe, when caught in camp at night, is generally put in the irons used for fettering a mare's forelegs in the evening, and he is then called *rabiṭ*. In order to save his life he must offer some animals of his herd as a ransom. In this case it is said that "the captive sent his movable property instead of his neck, *ar-rabiṭ kallat ḥalāleh ḥiddām rukubteh*."

577 To steal from a fellow tribesman or even from a neighbor
 626 is considered a disgrace. A thief of this type is called *bawwāk*,
 672 *neṣūl*, or *nedū*. No one will suffer him to come to his tent. Should he enter a tent in another camp, any one knowing him will instantly call the owner's attention to him: "This man is a *bawwāk*. Let him not sleep in your place! *Hāda bawwāk lā ṭhallūh jamrah 'endakom*." However, if his sons are known to be honest, they are not made to suffer for their father's shame.

685 If anyone can show indisputable proofs that a fellow
 627 tribesman has stolen, for instance, a firearm from him and if the other denies it, the robbed man takes two or three of the offender's camels, drives them before the tent of a more powerful neighbor, and, after obtaining his protection for them, *adhālhen 'alejh*, brings his witnesses. The protector must then

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aid him in obtaining his rights. *jimašši-l-haḳḳ*. First he goes to the accused and asks him to return the stolen weapon or to declare on *ḡehira* oath (see above, p. 430) that he has stolen nothing. Should he refuse to do either, the protector will declare: "Behold! So-and-So resists, although the weapon belonging to X is in his belly. The she-camels for whom the latter has asked my protection from this day are his own. Beware everyone who would take them away from him. Behold! they stand before my face."

His honor, his good name are the principal motives of a Rwejli's charity. There is nothing he fears as much as dishonor to his good name and a reflection on his character, or, as he says, the blackening of his face. Should he fail to guard his protégé effectually, to get compensation for him who walks before his countenance, should he disregard his guest, in all these cases he is threatened with the blackening of his face. The wronged man then ties a black rag to a long stick or to a spear and cries:

"This is the black flag of So-and-So. I put myself under his protection and he has not freed me; I suffered loss before his face; I was his guest and he has not fed me. May Allāh blacken his face! *Hādi rāje sowda' flān eben flān dahalt 'alejh w-lā fakkni rāh rizḳi bwaḡheh mā 'aššāni sawwad allāh waḡheh*." Naturally the people are eager to learn the details and on hearing them run to the accused to mete out justice.

PROTECTION FROM OPPRESSORS; RECOGNITION OF BENEFACTORS

If a man of power oppresses a weaker one and the latter is unable to defend his honor himself, he ties a piece of black tent cloth to a stick or spear, rides around the camp of his kin, and shouts:

"My friends, O ye people who give protection! know ye that my face has been insulted by the powerful So-and-So; *rub'i jā hla-l-ḡamijje ḳaṭṭa' waḡhi flān al-belijje*."

This is a sign to his kinsmen to mount their horses or camels and to parade before him shouting their battle cry, *je'arḡūn 'endeh w-jentaḡūn*: "X, behold, here I stand before thee, O X! *jā flān 'ajnēk [sic] jā flān*."

When all are assembled, they tear up and throw away the black flag, surround the tent of their powerful neighbor,

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513 *A culprit while asleep must not be killed by an avenger,*
 628 since this would bring vengeance on the latter's own head and
 [764] his vengeance would not be accomplished. For a sleeping Bed-
 ouin has no soul and is as good as dead. A dead person cannot
 replace a living one, and he that injures a corpse involves the
 whole clan in his guilt. Therefore the avenger first awakens
 the culprit with the words: "O So-and-So! dost thou remember
 that So-and-So dwells in thy belly?"

628 On finding the culprit, the avenger kills him, slits the
 652 corners of his mouth up to the ears, cuts off his ears, and
 672 sticks them into his mouth. Then everybody knows it for the
 deed of an avenger, and no search is made for the perpetrator.
 With the death of the real culprit the vengeance comes to an
 end, *istaddow tārhom*, and his whole kin may return home in
 peace.

He who unintentionally kills a man or a woman is not
 liable to vengeance but has to give compensation, often after
 prolonged negotiations.

If a person is killed by either a horse or a camel, its
 owner places the dead person's clothes on the animal, brings
 it to his nearest relative, and leaves it there with the words:
 "This is thy blood shedder; take him!"

● 685 For the intentional killing of a horse or camel four times
 the animal's value is to be paid; if the animal was killed
 accidentally, its actual market price only.

TYPICAL INSTANCES OF THE APPLICATION OF THE LAWS
OF VENGEANCE

628 In the rainy season of 1905 the Kmuṣa were camping
 together with the 'Ebede between al-Rurāb and at-Tinf, their
 watering place there being the Habra at-Tnejf. The stud camel
 owned by Mnezzel eben Nims of the Kmuṣa attached himself,
 'ajjar 'ala, to the she-camels belonging to one Harrās of the
 'Ebede, who let him cover one of his she-camels, *zarab beh*
lenākteh. When this came to the ears of Mnezzel's son Hsej-
 jān he reproached Harrās angrily: "Thou hast used our stud
 camel without telling my father of it." Harrās retorted, and
 an altercation followed, *tehdwašow*, in the course of which
 Harrās struck Hsejjān with his cudgel, *madrūb*; whereupon
 the youth stabbed him with his dagger, killing him instantly.
 As soon as he realized what he had done he drove his herd to
 the tent of Eben Msejjeb of the Msike, ran inside, and begged: